

Class observation



Traditional Education vs. Progressive Education Certain teaching and learning practices focus more on carrying out specified lesson plans to prescribed curricula for the purpose of passing test, i. e. the traditional education. Other philosophies of education, such as aesthetic education may be described as emphasizing the " progressive education", i. e. the pursuit of inquiry and exploration. Students (and teachers) in the first type of school focus on grades, tests and completion of teacher-directed assignments; students in the second type of school emphasize on their learning. Here we are considering the implications of traditional education vs. progressive education for our society. I went to the Academy of Saint Joseph Catholic School in Brentwood New York to observe first graders. I would have to say it was a great experience. Before I entered the class room, I had a conversation with the principal, Sister Kerry. She explained to me that each teacher had their own style of teaching and were allowed to express themselves in any way possible to get their children to learn. One thing that was extremely obvious was their school philosophy. As soon as you entered the school, there was an extremely large poster board. The underlying philosophy and rules of the organization of an idealistic system were very clear. It was a list of the things that they believed in, and what they wanted the children to focus on. Keeping all these in mind, I entered the class room where I was introduced to Ms. McGeiald. Once again the children were as cute as a button. I arrived early so the class was just getting started. The teacher explained to me that the children were working on their diaries – writing down complete sentences of the things they did over the holidays. At the beginning of the year, they started out with one sentence and now they were up to five. She expressed to me that this process takes some time but

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she felt it was important to give the children an outlet for their imagination. This is a great way for the children to express themselves as well as I thought, as it gave them a chance to be creative. As the children finished up with their diaries, I just took a seat in the back of the class room. After the class was finished with that project they had a circle time to have a discussion about the things they planned on doing for the rest of the day. What impressed me was the way the children focus and did critical thinking at the same time. They were required to use their “ thinking caps,” as the teacher put it. Ms. McGeiald challenged their ability to listen as well. MsGeiald was more concerned with the progressive style of educating her students. When I spoke about her style of teaching, she explained to me that each child has their own style of learning, so if she would develop one format of teaching and didn't prove to be flexible, some students will just not learn and thus be behind. I could tell that her number one goal was to educate those children, and she was doing it on her own terms. One thing that I noticed was that between each subject, she changed a location because it became hard to have the children sit still for so long. After math, which required a lot of thinking for the children, she wanted them to get out and walk around a little to get their blood flowing again. Each lesson was well planned and thought out. The transition from one lesson to the other was good. After that small moment, they went back to their chairs and read some vocabulary. The children raised their hands eagerly to answer a question. She handed out M &M for each word they got correct. Every child was getting involved and even the ones who were not participating. She would call on them just to make sure that they were paying attention. Considering the implications of traditional education vs. progressive education for our

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society, I feel that each philosophy is creating different types of democratic citizens. We discussed a reading in class about pressure of test, not only by the teacher but for the child as well. The teachers are under so much pressure from September to June to prepare their students for these state exams. I feel this can hamper a teacher from doing his/her job at one's full capacity. On the other hand, traditional education can also benefit our society as well as the children in meticulous. I feel the teachers need to step it up a notch. If we get rid of the teachers who are not willing to alter their style of teaching, they need to be notified about the problems and thus offered the solutions. If they are still struggling with altering their teaching formats, they need to be terminated for good, for the sake of the children and the society.